



# Lane Departure

In Kentucky from 2003-2007, there were 207,758 lane departure crashes, resulting in 79,154 injuries and 2,794 fatalities. These types of crashes accounted for 33% of all traffic collisions, 61% of all fatalities and 37% of all injuries occurring on Kentucky highways.



The majority of these crashes occur on low traffic volume two lane roads, even though rural roads carry only 14% of Kentucky's traffic.

## 5 Types of Lane Departure Collisions



- **Collisions with a fixed object :** Occurs when a vehicle collides with a guardrail, tree, roadway sign, etc.
- **Collisions with a non-fixed object:** Occurs when a vehicle collides with a deer, pedestrian, bicycle, etc.
- **Run-off-road:** Occurs when a vehicle runs off the roadway due to another vehicle, driver inattention/distraction, or driver fatigue.
- **Head-on collisions:** Occurs when a vehicle leaves the roadway and its driver over-compensates while trying to regain control, sending it into the opposing traffic lane. Also, a driver may swerve into oncoming traffic due to driver inattention/distraction or fatigue.
- **Sideswipe collisions:** Occurs when a vehicle leaves its traffic lane and hits the side of another vehicle.

## Regain Control Of Your Vehicle

If you run off the roadway, remember these steps to re-enter your traffic lane safely:

- Do not use the brakes or accelerator.
- Get a firm grip on the steering wheel and steer smoothly toward the roadway.
- Gently straighten the steering wheel once the front tire is back on the pavement.

## Avoid A Rollover

**Be alert!** Rollovers occur frequently on curved, rural roads so pay attention while driving. Remember, the narrower the road, the less margin for error.

**Don't panic!** Many rollovers stem from drivers abruptly turning the steering wheel in an effort to quickly get the tires back onto pavement.

**Don't speed!** Striking a ditch or embankment at high speeds may cause the vehicle to flip.

## Did You Know?

Nationwide, there are:



**THREE** lane departure **fatalities** every hour

**ONE** lane departure **injury** every minute

**THREE** lane departure **crashes** every minute

Sources: American Automobile Association (AAA), and National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP)

# What Can You Do?

Educate yourself on the human factors that contribute to lane departure crashes and change your driving behavior if necessary. The human factors are:

- **Excessive speed**
- **Inattention**
- **Lack of driving experience**
- **Low seat belt usage**
- **Impairment due to alcohol, drugs, medication, or fatigue**



# What Can We Do?

The Transportation Cabinet is committed to substantially reducing lane departure fatalities and injuries in a cost-effective manner, and is a lead state on lane departure initiatives. Some examples of our efforts and proposed improvements include:

- Install safety devices such as center and shoulder rumble strips, buffer medians, and guardrails.
- Improve shoulder drop-offs, slopes and ditches if allowable.
- Test strategies in pilot project areas.
- Develop a directed patrol program targeting lane departure high crash locations and two-lane roads.
- Increase communication with local media to promote lane departure issues, programs, and results.
- Continue support of highway safety educational programs.



# What Are Rumble Strips?

Rumble strips are raised or grooved patterns on the roadway center or shoulder that provide both an audible warning (rumbling sound) and a physical vibration to alert drivers that they are leaving the driving lane. There are two types of rumble strips used in Kentucky:



**Shoulder:** Most state maintained road have rumble strips located on the shoulder to prevent lane departure collisions.

**Center:** Selected state maintained roads with two or four lanes not divided by a median have rumble strips in the center to prevent head-on collisions.



## For Additional Information:

- **American Automobile Association:** [www.aaa.com](http://www.aaa.com)
- **AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety:** [www.aaafoundation.org](http://www.aaafoundation.org)
- **Federal Highway Administration:** <http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/>
- **National Cooperative Highway Research Program:** <http://www.trb.org/CRP/NCHRP/NCHRP.asp>
- **National Highway Traffic Safety Administration:** [www.nhtsa.dot.gov](http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov)